



The Asia Foundation

**ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS PROGRAM
IN THE PHILIPPINES**

*Increasing Information, Communication, and Collaboration to Prevent Domestic and
International Trafficking of Filipinos and Protect Victims*

**A QUARTERLY REPORT FROM THE ASIA FOUNDATION
TO THE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
01 APRIL 2007 – 30 JUNE 2007**

(AGREEMENT NO. 492-A-00-06-00034-00)

ANTI-TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS PROGRAM

Increasing Information, Communication, and Collaboration to Prevent Domestic and International Trafficking of Filipinos and Protect Victims

Quarterly Report 01 April to 30 June 2007

Overview

This quarterly report covers activities from 01 April to 30 June 2007 under the Anti-Trafficking Program of The Asia Foundation entitled ***Increasing Information, Communication, and Collaboration to Prevent Domestic and International Trafficking of Filipinos and Protect Victims*** through a grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with grant number AID 492-A-00-06-00034. The grant covers the period from October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2008.

The main goal of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Project is to prevent trafficking of Filipinos and protect victims within and across borders. Specifically, the project seeks to: (1) develop domestic capacity to prevent trafficking and protect victims; (2) mobilize public and local government support for anti-trafficking efforts; and (3) strengthen coordination and collaboration among United States Government (USG)-funded anti-trafficking projects.

In this reporting period, amid the tumult of the congressional and local elections, research on trafficking in airport continues, the US Ambassador participated a capsule laying ceremony at the airport halfway house site, capacity-building activities were conducted for anti-trafficking organizations, and preparations were made for the media campaign on trafficking in persons. This reporting period also takes into account the release of the 2007 Anti-Trafficking Report published by the United States Department of State.

Visayan Forum, one of the project partners, continued its research on trafficking in airports. Its airport halfway house personnel also continue to work offsite directly through the VF Main Office, while awaiting the completion of the airport halfway house.

Venture for Fund Raising and Probe Media Foundation Inc. conducted back-to-back capacity-building activities for Foundation and USG partners in anti-human trafficking efforts, while the second round of Grant Management Seminar was conducted by The Asia Foundation. The Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) and the Foundation have also started preparations for creating an anti-trafficking mechanism at the local level during this reporting period.

A regular coordination meeting was also conducted this reporting period to get updates from each partner organization as well as project management updates. Details of activities accomplished within this period are reported below.

Developing domestic capacity to prevent trafficking and protect victims

A. Study of Trafficking at Airports

Visayan Forum Foundation (VF) is conducting a study to examine how people are trafficked at airports in the Philippines. The results of the study will inform the design of the transit center, help desks, and safe houses that will be established by the VF in partnership with the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA). The study will also inform training and public education initiatives.

Accomplishments (April – June 2007)

- Originally the planned methodology included not only a review of related studies but also a random sampling of around 100 potential victims of trafficking, focus group discussions with repatriated or intercepted victims, and interviews with airport authorities, law enforcement officers, immigration police, service providers, government officials and international institutions. However, VF reported to the Foundation that their researchers had difficulty obtaining permits from the airport authorities to conduct survey and key informant interviews. With this new development, VF experienced delays in their research, and asked for a project extension, which the Foundation granted.
- VF has already conducted literature scan of local and international trafficking, and review of existing case studies of international trafficking victims. It is already in the process of conducting random survey among passengers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), and key informant interviews with airport authorities, law enforcement agencies, immigration officials, service providers and government institutions.

B. Establishing Help Desks and Anti-Trafficking Task Forces in Airports

The Asia Foundation will provide start-up funds to Visayan Forum for the *Bahay Silungan sa Paliparan*, or half-way house at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). The Foundation will support the establishment of the Help Desks and the training of its staff and the training of Inter-agency Airport Task Forces to identify potential and actual trafficking victims, refer victims to the half-way houses for shelter, and arrest traffickers. Training topics will include: orientation on what is trafficking; how to identify vulnerable people; what to do when trafficking is suspected; and how to organize an intervention to protect victims and/or arrest traffickers. Counterpart funds will be provided by the NAIA, specifically in the construction of the halfway house, which will be completed by November 2007.

Accomplishments (01 April to 30 June 2007)

- On May 7, 2007, the MIAA and VF conducted a Capsule Laying Ceremony at the site of the Halfway House in NAIA. The event marks the commencement of the construction of the *Bahay Silungan sa Paliparan* (Airport Halfway House). More than a hundred visitors and well-wishers, including the NAIA officials and personnel, Visayan Forum officers and staff, U.S. Embassy and USAID officials, The Asia Foundation Representative and staff, Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking member organizations, other operational and funding partners of the Visayan Forum, and the media, attended the event. United States Ambassador to the Philippines Kristie A. Kenney served as the event's guest of honor, joining MIAA General Manager Alfonso Cusi and VF President Ma. Cecilia Flores Oebanda.

In her keynote address, the US Ambassador placed emphasis on the Philippines' accomplishments to curb trafficking, but stressed that the Philippines should not be complacent. She added that the Filipinos should continue to work for the implementation of the law, hand in hand with the US Government and other governments.

The *Bahay Silungan sa Paliparan* is intended as a processing center for women and children victims of potential victims of human trafficking passing through the NAIA, as well as a temporary shelter where counseling and other center-based protective services will be provided. Some photos of the activities are included in this report's attachment. The VF press release for the ceremony is also attached.

- VF social workers assigned at the NAIA also continue to work with their partners at the airport to observe, investigate, and report any suspected trafficking activities and rescue victims or potential victims. As of this reporting period, VF had assisted 40 trafficking victims since the start of the project. It also stepped up its coordination with the Philippine Commission on Human Rights, International Justice Mission, and Interpol to intercept trafficking victims being repatriated to the Philippines. VF's role in the rescue of some 26 Filipinas trafficked to the Ivory Coast was featured in a two-part special report of the Philippine Daily Inquirer on April 26 and 27¹.

¹ Visayan Forum Foundation, Anti-Slavery International, Interpol and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, had banded together to rescue 26 young Filipino women from bars in a red-light district in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa, who were trafficked in January and rescued three months later. The full stories may be read through the following links:

- Part One, April 26, 2007 (Out of Africa: Filipino sex prisoner thought she was in France): http://archive.inquirer.net/view.php?db=1&story_id=62532
- Part Two, April 27, 2007 (Out of Africa: 26 rescued, one found in a closet-sized room): http://archive.inquirer.net/view.php?db=1&story_id=62762

C. Capacity Building of Anti-Trafficking Groups

The issue of sustainability of NGOs has long been a concern among international and donor agencies, and the Foundation addresses this issue for anti-trafficking groups under this program. Through a menu of technical assistance activities in advocacy strategies, project management, financial management, resource mobilization, volunteer management, facing the media, and writing press releases and success stories on trafficking issues, in order that they can better serve the communities and advocate more effectively, especially to the general public and the “unconverted.”

Capacity building activities include: Ateneo School of Government’s Advocacy Training; BRIDGES Inc.’s technical assistance on program management and organizational development; the Foundation’s financial management training; VSO Bahaginan’s technical assistance on Basic Volunteer Management; Venture for Fund Raising’s Basic Fund Raising Course; Probe Media Foundation’s media training; and Center for Community Journalism and Development’s writing workshop.

Accomplishments (01 April to 30 June 2007)

- Venture for Fund Raising conducted the Basic Fund Raising Course for anti-trafficking NGOs on April 23-25 in Pasig City. Twenty-nine participants from 16 anti-trafficking partners attended the workshop. This workshop was aimed at building and strengthening the institutional capacity of the participating NGOs by introducing fund raising concepts and the various fund raising vehicles and allowing the participants to join in activities where they can practice some of the learning and their skills may be enhanced.

Venture used a mix of participatory techniques and input sessions all throughout the three-day activity, where participants were able to learn fund raising concepts, fund raising vision, mission and goals, identifying and developing constituency, the need to diversify sources of income, organizational requirements for successful resource mobilization, monitoring and evaluation of a fund raising campaign, and the fund raising planning process. Venture cited various examples or cases showing good practices, techniques and strategies for fund raising.

The workshop ended with a session on Next Steps Planning & a Commitment Exercise where each of the participants listed his or her fund raising priorities for the next two weeks. Some photos of the activity are included in the attachment.

The Foundation and Venture officers met on May 23 to discuss the results of the Basic Fund Raising Workshop. Venture commented that the participants had a high level of involvement, especially from Visayan Forum, who had immediately contacted Venture to seek assistance for their capital campaign. Venture staff also observed that those who have direct services for anti-trafficking victims were the ones who had clear ideas about what they needed in terms of fund raising. Venture had followed up on the fund raising priorities of the participants to the

Fund Raising Training, and has begun monitoring the progress of next steps intended by the participating organizations. The results of monitoring will be the basis for the second workshop which will be held in November 2007.

- Probe Media Foundation Inc. (PMFI) conducted the *Facing the Media* workshop for anti-trafficking NGOs on April 26-27 in Pasig City, back-to-back with Venture's fund raising workshop. Twenty participants from 15 anti-trafficking organizations participated. Resource speakers gave participants practical exercises to help them come up with key objectives for them to focus their messages. Through workshops and short lectures, the participants crafted their one governing idea and identified their audiences so that on their own, they could come up with effective “sound bites” to deliver during interviews concerning anti-trafficking in persons issues.

Premiere broadcast journalist Ms. Cheche Lazaro of Probe Productions, Inc. gave practical tips and advice for facing the media, including ethics and behavior during interviews. Participants were then subjected to simulated “facing the media” encounters for print, TV, or radio, where each participant was given a hypothetical scenario close to their line of work, which served as the interview focus. Veteran investigative journalists served as interviewers and evaluators for the different media scenarios. After each scenario, evaluators gave their critique of the participants’ performance. Some photos of the activity are included in the attachment.

After the Facing the Media Workshop, Probe Media Foundation selected six organizations to receive follow-up training and technical assistance, the first five of which will become priority. The selected organizations are: IACAT, International Justice Mission, Visayan Forum Foundation, WomenLEAD Foundation, Kanlungan, and The Solidarity Center Philippines as back-up. PMFI contacted the organizations and began the coaching process.

- The second Grant Management Seminar was held on May 28-30, 2007 in Davao City. Thirty-one participants attended, representing 14 organizations, which included not only Foundation and USAID partners and beneficiaries in previous anti-trafficking related activities, but also Foundation’s partners in its Policy Reform and Conflict Management Programs.

The participants learned about USAID and the Foundation’s grant management policies and requirements. The Foundation’s finance staff also taught the participants basic operations of QuickBooks, the accounting software being used in drafting financial reports. They were also able to ask questions about funding priorities and project implementation which were answered by officers of the Foundation and USAID. Some photos of the activity are included in the attachment.

- This reporting period also brought about partnerships with Ateneo School of Government (ASoG) and VSO Bahaginan. Ateneo will conduct an advocacy training workshop for 30 participants from selected Metro Manila and province-based anti-trafficking organizations, and have provided The Asia Foundation with a concept paper for the training. The Ateneo is currently undertaking a brief research of anti-trafficking initiatives in the Philippines, and the important role of advocacy in anti-trafficking initiatives.

The Center for Policy and Research of the Ateneo is helping ASoG in conducting the research on trafficking in persons and determining advocacy strategies to highlight this issue. ASoG is also drafting the training module, which will include experimental methodologies, including coaching, which is observed to be a more effective training strategy for professionals.

- VSO Bahaginan meanwhile will conduct a Basic Volunteer Management Training for anti-trafficking organizations. This training is designed to meet the learning objectives and organizational needs of selected anti-trafficking partners that are dependent on volunteers, in promoting and developing sustainable volunteering within their organizations. As a result of the training, anti-trafficking groups will develop an operations manual for their Volunteer Programs.

As part of its preparatory activities, VSO Bahaginan sent a profiling tool (training needs survey form) to the selected anti-trafficking partners, to gauge the general level of capacity of these organizations in handling volunteers, and determine their organizational needs in terms of managing their volunteers.

- On April 25, Foundation staff and BRIDGES consultants met with prospective participants of the organizational diagnosis, to introduce BRIDGES and orient them on the framework and organizational diagnosis tool to be used and the steps to be taken during the diagnosis. Although most of those who attended the orientation were receptive to the idea, other organizations expressed apprehension, mostly about their readiness as an organization to undergo organizational diagnosis, and to be faced with the results of the diagnosis. Since what was being offered was merely a diagnosis, and not intervention, some participants asked how the Foundation could support them in implementing interventions, and how the Foundation will sustain the activity should it decide not to provide funding support for implementing interventions. Based on these questions, the Foundation and BRIDGES have agreed to look into these concerns before undergoing any of the procedures for organizational diagnosis. As yet, the Foundation and BRIDGES are still working on formalizing a project agreement.

Mobilizing public and local government support for anti-trafficking efforts

A. Mobilizing Local Communities to Prevent Trafficking

Sustained and effective anti-trafficking efforts should be anchored on community-based interventions and commitment from local governments. Specifically, there is a need to localize the implementation of the law through local anti-trafficking mechanisms, i.e. community watchdogs to watch out for illegal recruiters and traffickers, local ordinances to implement and allocate budget for anti-trafficking initiatives; etc. This should serve as a coordinating mechanism at the local level with the active participation of women and children's organizations.

In partnership with the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT), the Foundation will conduct advocacy campaigns to encourage local government units to establish appropriate local anti-trafficking mechanisms. The project may present models of successful local community-based anti-trafficking efforts, such as the Calbayog City experience on Bantay-Bugaw, for interested communities to adopt the model.² The IACAT will compile local ordinances on trafficking and refine these into a model ordinance, to share with responsive and interested local governments. In partnership with the IACAT, the Foundation will present the model local ordinances to local governments and communities in the various Foundation-organized meetings with the different leagues of elected officials³ of the Philippines, network of women officials, as well as in the TIP roadshows planned by the USAID-ROLE project. The Foundation, working closely with the IACAT, will present the model local ordinance to incoming local government officials and communities interested to replicate, legislate, and implement this ordinance. The Foundation, in collaboration with the representatives of anti-trafficking groups, will provide orientation seminars on trafficking in persons for the network of elected women councilors in order for them to effectively work for local ordinances to implement anti-trafficking programs in the communities they serve.

Accomplishments (01 April to 30 June 2007)

- Foundation staff and IACAT secretariat staff met with the prospective consultant on local ordinance drafting on May 10 to discuss the workplan for this particular activity. The consultant will gather all available local ordinances, analyze the content of the ordinances, and produce a comparative analysis, containing the common and distinct subject matters within the ordinances. The consultant will also present to the IACAT the essential features of a good local ordinance, why an

² In Calbayog City, Samar, the Coalition Against Trafficking-in-Women – Asia-Pacific (CATWAP), with Asia Foundation, support has established the **Bantay Bugaw** community-based program to combat trafficking in two pilot barangays in the area. The Bantay Bugaw program served as an effective mechanism for building public awareness on the trafficking issue and RA 9208, as well as in mobilizing citizenry action for pro-active monitoring, surveillance, documentation and proper agency endorsement of suspected illegal recruitment activities at the community level. In 2005, the project principals in one of the pilot barangays succeeded in passing a local ordinance establishing mechanisms to prevent trafficking in persons.

³ The individual Leagues include the following: League of Provinces of the Philippines, League of Cities of the Philippines, League of Municipalities of the Philippines, Liga ng mga Barangay ng Pilipinas, League of Vice Governors of the Philippines, Vice-Mayors League of the Philippines, Provincial Board Members League of the Philippines, Philippine Councilors League, National Movement of Young Legislators, Lady Local Legislators League, and Pambansang Pederasyon ng mga Sangguniang Kabataan.

ordinance is needed, and how an ordinance is passed. The consultant will also facilitate a writeshop with IACAT members and other stakeholders for them to draft the model local ordinance. The consultant will finally present to the IACAT a draft model local ordinance. The Foundation has requested the USAID for approval of the consultant's rates. In the meantime, IACAT and the Foundation met on June 26 to discuss, among others, the possible dates for the local ordinance writeshop, which is tentatively set in the last week of August.

B. Media Campaigns and Increased Media Reportage of Trafficking Issues

The Foundation will support a number of media partners to conduct a well-coordinated media campaign to increase awareness of trafficking and generate public support for anti-trafficking programs. Specifically, it will work with: Probe Productions to create a documentary film; *Newsbreak* to feature stories on trafficking in persons; Center for Community Journalism and Development (CCJD) to produce compelling stories on human trafficking, and provide community journalists with a forum for their stories on human trafficking; Foundation for Communication Initiatives (FOCI), to produce radio infomercials on trafficking issues; and *Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas* (KBP, or Association of Broadcasters of the Philippines) for the strategic airing of the TIP radio infomercials, as well as provide opportunities for TIP resource persons/Speakers Bureau to have discussions on the issue in several prominent radio programs.

Accomplishments (01 April to 30 June 2007)

- *Newsbreak's* Human Trafficking website link, www.humantraffickinginasia.net, was launched on the web on June 23, after the Foundation and *Newsbreak* staff discussed the website's content, appearance, and disclaimers. Although the site is in the early stages of development it already contains an introduction, links to an article about trafficking ([Human Trafficking 101: What Trafficking Is All About](#)), the databank of trafficking in persons laws, policies, news and reports, and to project partners, as well as an invitation to join the forum that discusses issues and information on trafficking. With the aim to make the website, database, and online forum known and useful to partner organizations, Foundation staff and *Newsbreak* will conduct an orientation on the website and its links to project partners. The discussion page linked to the website enables anti-trafficking partners to register, upload news, stories, or new data on trafficking in the Philippines, and discuss these issues online with other partners.

Aside from the website construction, *Newsbreak* is also currently working on the special publication on trafficking in persons, due for release in August 2007. The writers are currently finalizing their stories which will be included in the newsmagazine. They have researched trafficking stories in Sabah (and other areas in Malaysia), Zamboanga (Philippines), Samar (Philippines), Hong Kong, Australia, and Japan, to mention a few.

- Probe Productions is currently on pre-production stage of its documentary film. Its producers met with Visayan Forum Foundation and International Justice Mission to get background information on trafficking in persons. Probe has selected the province of Samar as one of its target venues for documentary.
- CCJD meanwhile has alerted to their partner community journalists about the upcoming community journalist training. Its project team, composed of noted journalists and academicians have drafted the training modules. The schedules as well as venues were finalized: July 12-14 in Davao City, October 4-6 in Manila, and January 24-26 in Cebu City.
- FOCI submitted its workplan, as well as the first two studies of radio infomercial script on June 19. The draft scripts were discussed and reviewed during the TIP Partners Meeting held on July 3. It was initially agreed that the radio infomercial would be 45 seconds long, and would be translated into two dialects. FOCI had secured permission from Visayan Forum to use their hotlines in their local offices for public reporting of trafficking cases.

Strengthening coordination and collaboration among USG-funded anti-trafficking projects

For this objective, the Foundation will convene its anti-trafficking partners, as well as other USG-funded anti-trafficking groups in order to strengthen the collaboration and coordination amongst the partners and the various stakeholders (government agencies, local officials, community members, and other NGOs). The Foundation will convene the various stakeholders in order to have a coordinated approach in addressing the issue of trafficking in persons. For example, how to increase convictions through collaborative working relations among law enforcement officers, local government officials, business groups, religious leaders, medical professionals, counselors, shelter home managers, livelihood trainers, NGO representatives, government social workers, and other members of the community. The Foundation will link its anti-trafficking partners and other USG-funded anti-trafficking groups with various media groups and non-traditional partners in order to create media mileage and generate private sector support for the anti-trafficking activities.

Accomplishments (01 April to 30 June 2007)

- A TIP Partners' Meeting was held on June 6 at The Asia Foundation to share updates and plans of each project. During the meeting, the imminent release of the 2007 U.S. Department of State's TIP Report was discussed, specifically the possibility of Philippines being downgraded into the watchlist. Foundation staff and the USAID CTO reminded the group of the initial feedback of Ms. Sally Neumann, one of the writers of the TIP Report, that should the Philippines be put on the watch list, the main reasons would be because of lack of political will, as exemplified by the minimal government funds being put into anti-trafficking

efforts, and more importantly, not enough trafficking convictions. However, government and nongovernment efforts in the prevention of trafficking should not be discounted.

During the meeting, project partners who were present gave updates to their ongoing/ accomplished projects, and others were able to give their inputs for the next steps. A representative from VSO Bahaginan, which is new to the group, gave a brief orientation about the organization, and how it operates worldwide and in the Philippines. He also gave a short background on volunteering in the Philippines, what courses are available for organizations that want to develop its volunteer management program. For anti-trafficking groups, the plan is to examine three short case studies on volunteer management of anti-trafficking organizations with volunteers, and use these cases in the volunteer management training that will be conducted in October and November. Visayan Forum has agreed to be one of the cases studies to be used by VSO Bahaginan.

The Foundation also provided updates on FOCI activities. The draft scripts still needed information on hotlines that listeners could call if they have concerns or reports about trafficking in their communities. Visayan Forum offered the numbers at their regional offices. IACAT also suggested using the hotline numbers of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

- Foundation-funded secretariat support to the IACAT continues within this reporting period. The consultant has, since April, helped the IACAT secretariat conduct regular meetings with IACAT members, attended Foundation-funded activities as well as other activities concerning the IACAT, and developed a filing system of all available resources and data on trafficking. With her help, IACAT has finalized the Manual on the Investigation and Prosecution of TIP Cases, which awaits publication, conducted the 4th workshop for the finalization of the Philippine Guidelines for the Protection of the Rights of Trafficked Children, assisted in the anti-trafficking road show campaigns and training of prosecutors and social workers.
- Other accomplishments for this reporting period include formalizing project partnerships with Ateneo School of Government for its conduct of technical assistance on advocacy training, Foundation for Communication Initiatives for the production of radio infomercials in trafficking, and VSO Bahaginan for the volunteer management workshop.

Other Activities

Accomplishments (01 April to 30 June 2007)

- On May 25, Visayan Forum invited the Foundation and other partners in anti-trafficking, to a round table discussion to discuss issues in prosecution of

trafficking cases. The discussion was organized to engender resolutions for the difficulties encountered by anti-trafficking groups in prosecuting cases. Among the observations given were the frequent dismissal of trafficking cases or downgrading cases to one involving illegal recruitment; an alarmingly few cases of trafficking for forced labor in the courts; the inability of the authorities to snag big-time trafficking syndicates; and difficulties in establishing the purpose of exploitation (especially true for victims intercepted at ports). These facts discourage the anti-trafficking task forces at the ports, thus, Visayan Forum sought help from its partners on how to present these concerns to the Department of Justice. To seek advice from legal groups on how to best proceed with this matter, Visayan Forum, the Foundation, USAID and its Rule of Law Effectiveness Project staff, met on June 6 with representatives of lawyers' groups, WomenLEAD, International Justice Mission, and Child Justice League. During the meeting the group brainstormed several strategies to address the very low number of prosecuted trafficking cases. The group decided to explore possibilities on all the fronts presented, and to provide updates on the possible approaches in their next meeting.

- The U.S. Department of State released the 2007 Trafficking in Persons Report on June 13; in this report the Philippines remains on the Tier 2 list. The report mentions that “corruption in the government and the general ineffectiveness of the judicial system impeded the government's ability to effectively prosecute trafficking cases” and that the government “should make greater efforts to combat internal trafficking by increasing public awareness activities and vigorously prosecuting those exploiting victims as well as making greater efforts to prosecute and convict public officials who profit from or are involved in trafficking.”

The IACAT members and Secretariat had briefly deliberated on the report, and while it agrees that its main challenge is really in prosecution, IACAT however wants to also emphasize the increasing number of cases filed each year⁴, which the courts have been mandated to prioritize. In 2007, it is expected that there will be more trafficking convictions. IACAT also argues that although efforts to prevent trafficking of migrant workers has been praised while that of combating internal trafficking has been found wanting, it does not mean that the Philippines has weak mechanisms for preventing internal trafficking. Still, IACAT will intensify its coordination with local and regional IACATs, to focus more on the prevention of internal trafficking.

- Inasmuch as the past three months were campaign period for the mid-term elections, project media partner Center for Community Journalism and Development maximized the opportunity to mainstream the trafficking issue in some of its Election Project 2007 activities, such as the Presentation of People's

⁴ According to IACAT updates (see [Newsbreak website databank](#) for the link), when the law had been implemented in 2003, only 12 cases were received; in 2004, the number increased 5 times; and in 2005, cases dramatically increased to 114. In 2006, the Department (of Justice) received 101 cases, and is still awaiting reports from other prosecution offices.

Agenda to the Candidates, Report of the Community (*Ulat sa Bayan*). This is to mentally prepare their media partners for the upcoming journalist training on covering trafficking as an issue for news or feature stories. Trafficking as an urgent issue was presented to media and representatives of different sectors, first in Puerto Princesa City with “*Suriin Bago Piliin*” forum themed “Now Hiring in Palawan – Qualified Candidates with Strong Human Rights Values” on April 13-14, and then in Iloilo City, during the “*Kinamatarung Kag Panghimanwa*” (Rights and Governance) on April 16-17. Visayan Forum officers served as resource persons in some of these activities. Puerto Princesa and Iloilo two of the many areas in the Philippines which are considered hot spots in terms of human trafficking.

Next Steps

Given the recommendations of the U.S. DOS TIP Report, and as part of the plans of the project partners, the Foundation aims to intensify its efforts in increasing public awareness through a more concerted media campaign.

Newsbreak will release the special publication on human trafficking in August 2007. The special publication will cover issues on human trafficking in the Philippines that will consist of in-depth and investigative stories on: how documents are forged (birth certificates, passports, etc.); lapses of government agencies or their complicity; weaknesses in ports of entry; and the involvement of the police, local government, labor and immigration officials. At the same time, *Newsbreak* will not only look at what are being done to correct these but also focus on successes of anti-trafficking groups. These stories will include: government policies and strategies to address these weaknesses; case studies of survivors; what NGOs are doing right; and what government is doing right.

The Human Trafficking in the Philippines website of *Newsbreak* will be augmented with additional stories and data in the next period. Stories from its special publication will be added to the website, as well as news, information and statistics from partner organizations will be included in the database. The online discussion forum will be up and running as well, moderated by *Newsbreak*, the Foundation, and selected anti-trafficking partners.

In the next reporting period, the Center for Community Journalism and Development will conduct the first community journalist training on trafficking in persons in July in Davao City; will finalize its radio infomercial script; and the Foundation will work with the *Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas* (Association of Broadcasters of the Philippines) to air these infomercials in September 2007. Probe Productions will also air its documentary on trafficking in August or September.

Aside from the concerted media campaign, the Foundation will also finalize its agreement with BRIDGES, Inc. so that it can proceed with the organizational diagnosis of anti-trafficking organizations. Likewise, the Foundation and IACAT will formalize

the contract with the consultant who will work with IACAT in drafting a model local ordinance. The writeshop is planned for August 2007, and the local ordinance will be available for lobbying at the local level by September 2007. IACAT will also commence planning for the sub-national anti-trafficking conference in the next period. IACAT will convene its members to take concrete steps towards the conduct of a conference in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao from October to December 2007.

As a follow up to *Facing the Media* workshop, conducted in April, within the next two months, Probe Media Foundation will be coordinating with the participants to find out if they had any media encounters and how the training had helped them. PMFI will also be planning for the next round of media training, this time for local leaders.

Venture for Fund Raising shall follow up the fundraising priorities submitted by the anti-trafficking groups who participated in the training and see whether these were accomplished. After which, each organization shall determine the fund raising activities they shall undertake in the next six months. The feedback provided by the anti-trafficking groups will serve as the inputs to the monitoring workshop which will be held in November.

Visayan Forum will conduct a validation workshop after the research data-gathering to encourage partners to contribute to the analysis on the phenomenon of trafficking at airports. The validation workshop will also encourage partners to know more about trafficking and the steps that can be taken to address gaps and challenges. This will be conducted in the next period.

The Foundation will continue with its regular partners' meetings, and aim to conduct at least one focus group discussion on trafficking in the next reporting period. If possible, it will also work on organizing a meeting of USG-funded anti-trafficking stakeholders, to be able to map previous and current anti-trafficking initiatives.

Annex A: Photos

Venture for Fund Raising Workshop – April 23-25, 2007



Participants discuss their statements on why they should be given the group funds.



Group members try to guess the word being acted by their teammate.

Facing the Media Workshop – April 26-27, 2007



Participants listen to a lecture on core messages.



Participants listen to a lecture on being interviewed.

Capsule Laying Ceremony – May 7, 2007



Ambassador Kenney, Cecille Oebanda and Alfonso Cusi, prepare to lay the capsule, while IACAT representative and MIAA officers look on.



The hosts, guest of honor and other visitors to the event.

Grant Management Seminar – May 28-30, 2007



Group members discuss about a sample grant budget.



The Foundation auditor teaches the participants about inputting entries into QuickBooks.

**Annex B:
Press Release for the NAIA Halfway House Capsule Laying Ceremony**



CONTACTS:

Ma. Cecilia Flores Oebanda
President and Executive Director

Roland Pacis
Deputy Director

Tel: (63) (2) 709-0573; 709-0711

Fax: 421-9423

Email: visforum@pltdt.net

Website: www.visayanforum.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 7, 2007

Halfway House for Trafficking Victims to Open at NAIA

Manila, Philippines (May 7, 2007). Today, the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) and Visayan Forum Foundation, Inc. will hold a Capsule Laying Ceremony to commence the building of the *Bahay Silungan sa Paliparan* (Airport Halfway House) at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). It has been reported that the Philippines is a primary source of human trafficking, with 300,000 to 500,000 reported and unreported cases of women and children trafficked to destinations in Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brunei, Japan, Korea, the Middle East, Europe and the United States annually. Most recently, news of the trafficking of Filipinas even to Africa shocked and angered human rights activists and feminist groups. The Philippine Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) reported that a total of 224 Filipino trafficking victims overseas have been repatriated between 2003 and 2005.

Visayan Forum and MIAA have forged an agreement whereby MIAA will build a halfway house for trafficked women and children at the NAIA, the most significant point of departure of trafficked victims, which Visayan Forum will operate. MIAA has earmarked its gender and development funds for the construction of the shelter which will be built at a 510-square meter lot at the NAIA complex. Mr. Alfonso Cusi, MIAA General Manager, expressed his acknowledgment of the airport authority's crucial role in the protection of women and children from being transited into exploitation such as prostitution and household slavery, thus entering into partnership with the Visayan Forum and the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT).

U.S. Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney is giving the keynote address at the event. The United States is a staunch supporter of anti-trafficking initiatives in the Philippines. Development assistance from the American people contributed more than U.S. \$1 million to support anti-trafficking activities in the Philippines last year, including training for law enforcement officials on evidence-gathering techniques for human trafficking cases, and partnerships with prosecutors on creating models for handling these sensitive cases. Portions were also given to Visayan Forum to operate halfway houses in ports, which is Visayan Forum's pioneering work against trafficking.

“(Victims) deserve our support, our counsel, and our aid,” said Ambassador Kenney last year. “I’ve had the privilege of visiting the Visayan Forum, a truly shining star in this effort. With support from many of the organizations here, including the American people, they provide halfway houses through partnerships with ports and the private sector for people to recover their lives, for victims to recover their dignity, and for them to have a chance to restore themselves to society as productive members.”

Visayan Forum will work closely with airport authorities and the NAIA Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP) headed by the Department of Justice (DOJ) to tighten the noose against traffickers who profit hefty sums by slipping victims into the international foreign destinations. According to Ms. Cecille Flores Oebanda, President and Executive Director of Visayan Forum, trafficking is alive and well at airports

throughout the country and is pervasive at the Manila airport, and they recognize the potential of the *Bahay Silungan sa Paliparan* to become a nerve center for advocacy and training of airport personnel to effectively counter trafficking activities at the airport.

The Halfway House will also become the base of operations for the Visayan Forum's anti-trafficking activities at the Manila International Airport. Once construction is completed in November 2007, Visayan Forum will provide immediate services such as temporary shelter, counseling, legal services, and other psychosocial interventions to victims and potential victims of trafficking at the NAIA.

Visayan Forum has more than fifteen years of experience working against forced labor and trafficking, and is recognized worldwide. Ms. Oebanda is a recipient of the 2005 anti-Slavery Award given by Anti-Slavery International, the world's oldest human rights organization. She was also recognized by the United Kingdom government as one of the Modern-Day Abolitionist in this year's celebration of the Bicentenary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade Act.

Visayan Forum's operations for this important project are supported by The Asia Foundation with funds from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United States Department of State. Dr. Steven Rood, Country Representative of the Foundation, said "The Asia Foundation is proud to support this cutting-edge project of the Visayan Forum and MIAA, and are excited to work once again with Visayan Forum in what is sure to be a successful partnership with the Manila International Airport Authority."

This event is held in the wake of the misfortune that befell 26 Filipino women, who were trafficked to Cote d'Ivoire in Africa and rescued on February 22, 2007. This and other cross country trafficking cases have highlighted the importance of effective counter-trafficking efforts.

About the Manila International Airport Authority

Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA), is the agency vested with the power to administer and operate the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA). It has the power to formulate and adopt for application in the airport internationally acceptable standards of airport accommodation service; upgrade and provide safe, efficient and reliable airport facilities for international and domestic air travel; and help encourage and promote international and domestic air traffic in the country as a means of making the Philippines as a center of international and domestic air travel.

It has partnered with the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) to create the NAIA Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (NTFATIP), an inter-agency task force composed of members from different law-enforcement agencies of the government, operating at the NAIA Complex under the guidance of the IACAT. This group is mandated to prevent and suppress trafficking at the NAIA Complex through a more systematic, coordinated and synchronized approach in law enforcement.

The MIAA has also committed itself with Visayan Forum and other social partners in enforcing international agreements and domestic laws and regulations for the protection women and children passing through this international and domestic hub. The agreement made with the Visayan Forum seeks to strengthen the MIAA's role in helping implement Republic Act 9208, or the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003.

For more details about the Manila International Airport Authority please visit www.miaa.gov.ph.

About the Visayan Forum Foundation, Inc.

Visayan Forum Foundation is a non-profit, non-stock, and tax exempt non-government organization in the Philippines, established in 1991. Visayan Forum works for the welfare of marginalized migrants, especially those working in the invisible and informal sectors, like domestic workers and trafficked women and children. It is licensed and accredited by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to provide “residential care and community based programs and services for women and children in especially difficult circumstances.”

It is most known for its pioneering and documented work on domestic workers in the Philippines, especially in pushing for the Domestic Workers’ Bill or the Batas Kasambahay. It is also in the forefront of providing services to trafficking victims through its Halfway Houses in major Philippine Ports.

So far, it manages four port halfway houses built by the Philippine Ports Authority, which have reached out to at least 11,000 persons for the past 5 years, operates 6 regional offices plus 14 project areas with 90 full-time staff and volunteers, set up a specialized safe houses for 57 survivors who filed 17 legal cases, and has intensive national and local campaigns. In 2005, its halfway program, which was initially supported by The Asia Foundation, was cited as an international best practice by the US Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report because it was able to mobilize public and private sector partnerships in attacking trafficking in Philippine ports.

For more details about the Visayan Forum Foundation please visit www.visayanforum.org, or call (63) (2) 709-0573.

###